

The Idiot's Guide to Starting a Legal Self-Help Center

▪ How to decide what legal issues to help with?

- Most popular (family, small claims)
- Most time-sensitive (ex. UD Answers)
- Potential results most onerous (ex. Unlawful Detainer, restraining order, emergency custody/visitation)
- Most difficult to fill out (ex. guardianship)
- Most helpful to Court due to volume (ex. divorce/family)
- What's funded (Small claims)
- Everything

▪ Legal Advice v. Legal Information

▪ Who to hire?

- Skills, personality, volunteer qualities

▪ How Judicial Officers can help You

- Referrals
- Understanding about your limits helping people
- Keeping SHC staff "in the loop"

▪ Service Delivery

- Triage
- One-on-one
- Workshop
- Clinic
- Referrals to other agencies

▪ Volunteers

▪ Space

- In Court or Not in Court?

▪ Practical tidbits/A Day in the Life...

- Start small/part-time
- Don't worry about advertising
- Allow for staff administrative time
- Build in quality control
- Materials!! – creating samples, organizing packets, updating, copying
- Angry customers
- Handling e-mails
- And more!

▪ Self-Help Center Resources

- www.legalselfhelp.ca.gov
- www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/
- Rutter Group/CEB
- Nolo Press & other self-help books
- Other Self-Help Centers...